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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04039 181408Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAA-01 SSM-03 MCT-02 HA-05
IO-13 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /096 W
----------071594 181412Z /43
O P 181328Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8761
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4039

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION: JULY 18, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 3988 (DTG 171221Z JUL 78)

1. SUMMARY. THE CEASE-FIRE IS GENERALLY HOLDING. THERE HAVE BEEN MORE NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO THE PRESIDENT'S JULY 15 SPEECH. THE SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER IS PLANNING A VISIT TO BEIRUT. THERE
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WERE REPORTEDLY ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS OF BEIRUT AND SOUTHERN COASTAL CITIES. THE SHIA' LEADER MET WITH THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT IN DAMASCUS. ROBERT FRANJIYAH SAID THE LEBANESE PEOPLE OVER-WHELMINGLY SUPPORTED THE SYRIAN ADF FORCES. BANKING ACTIVITY CONTINUES A SLOW RECOVERY, AND THE POUND REMAINS FIRM AGAINST THE DOLLAR.

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2. SECURITY SITUATION: THE CEASE-FIRE CONTINUES TO HOLD GENERALLY IN EAST BEIRUT. SPORADIC SMALL ARMS FIRE, HOWEVER, CONTINUES. TWO EXPLOSIONS WERE HEARD NEAR THE IRANIAN AND IRAQI EMBASSIES JULY 17, REPORTEDLY CAUSED BY ROCKETS THAT HAD BEEN FIRED TOWARD THE EMBASSIES FROM THE AREA OF SABRA CAMP.

3. CONTINUING REACTIONS TO THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH: LEBANESE ON BOTH THE LEFT AND RIGHT, THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, AND SYRIA HAVE REACTED NEGATIVELY TO PRESIDENT SARKIS' SPEECH OF JULY 15. (SEE SEPTEL).

4. PLANNED VISIT OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER: THE LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE ANNOUNCED JULY 17 THAT SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, ABD AL-HALIM KHADDAM, WOULD VISIT LEBANON SOME TIME DURING THE COMING WEEK. PRIME MINISTER HOSS SAID THAT KHADDAM'S VISIT WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN THE POSTPONEMENT OF HOSS'S OWN VISIT TO DAMASCUS, PLANNED FOR THE END OF THE WEEK. FOREIGN MINISTER BUTROS, ACCORDING TO THE PHALANGE PARTY'S "VOICE OF LEBANON," COMMENTED THAT HE HOPED KHADDAM'S VISIT WOULD INVOLVE MORE THAN JUST FACT FINDING.

5. ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS: HIGH-PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT OVERFLEW BEIRUT IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON JULY 17, CAUSING SONIC BOOMS. REUTERS AND THE LOCAL PRESS IDENTIFIED THE PLANES AS ISRAELI. BOTH THE PRESS AND EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEES REPORTED NUMEROUS, LOW-ALTITUDE, OVERFLIGHTS OF THE COASTAL AREA FROM SIDON SOUTH
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TO NAQURAH LATE JULY 17. THE PRESS EDENTIFIED THE AIRCRAFT AS "ISRAELI WARPLANES."

6. SHIA' LEADER'S MEETING WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT: LOCAL PRESS REPORTED THAT IMAM MUSA SADR, THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF LEBANON'S SHIA' MUSLIM COMMUNITY, MET IN DAMASCUS JULY 17 WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL-ASAD. THE LEBANESE NEWS AGENCY ALSO REPORTED THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER SAEB SALAM WOULD BE GOING TO DAMASCUS TO MEET WITH THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

7. ROBERT FRANJIYAH CRITICIZES PHALANGE AND NLP: ROBERT FRANJIYAH, SON OF FORMER PRESIDENT SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH, TOLD THE SYRIAN NEWSPAPER TISHRIN THAT THE PHALANGE AND NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTIES DID NOT REPRESENT THE MARONITES OF LEBANON, IKE REPORTED ON JULY 18. HE ALSO SAID "98 PERCENT" OF THE LEBANESE PEOPLE SUPPORT THE SYRIAN ADF FORCES.

8. BANKING ACTIVITY: BANKING ACTIVITY IS MAKING A SLOW RETURN TOWARD NORMAL WITH MORE STORES OPENING. THE CENTRAL BANK RESUMED CLEARING OPERATIONS JULY 17. THE LEBANESE POUND REMAINS FIRM AGAINST THE DOLLAR AT LL 2.90/$1.00.
PARKER

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